

Breastlink Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

WINTER 2007



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A Letter from John Link, MD, President of Breastlink, Inc.



I would like to wish our staff, patients and friends a wonderful holiday season! As we approach another new year, I have renewed optimism about progress in breast cancer treatment. We are clearly in a transitional period now, entering the age of "genomic oncology". We are beginning to unravel the "gene damage" or alterations that have lead to the cell becoming a cancer.

Defining the genetic alteration in the cancer cell is allowing us to understand the very nature of the cancer and gives us information regarding prognosis and new treatments. These new treatments will be targeted to

the cancerous cell and will have much less toxicity than our older chemo therapies.

New tests such as *Oncotype DX* and *Mammoprint* are the first flight of genetic prognostic testing. Lapatinib (Tykerb) is an example of the newer "targeted" molecules that are specific to a certain type of breast cancer.

Dr. Bichlien Nguyen, our Medical Director of Breast Cancer Research has written an article in this issue on our research through the Barbara K. Robinson Breast Cancer Research Program. Breastlink is committed to push ahead as fast as humanly possible, always relying on evidence-based medicine to bring new discoveries to clinical practice.

The cost of new technology remains a problem and I believe that our country subsidizes research and development for much of the world, evidenced by the higher price we pay for new drugs and procedures. I believe that the insurance industry needs reform. There needs to be a renewed collaboration between health care providers, big pharma, the government and the insurance industry where the primary focus is the patient's health.

San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Update COMMUNITY LECTURES

Please join the discussion of Hot Topics from the world's most important breast cancer conference held in December 2007. Our speakers will include Dr. James Waisman and Dr. Bichlien Nguyen with patient advocates Mary Billings, Marisa Sanchez and Kim Tankersley. Please come and bring a friend.

Sponsored by BREAST CANCER CARE & RESEARCH FUND

Please RSVP to (310) 927-7606 or paul@bccrf.org

January 22, 2008
Dr. James Waisman

LONG BEACH

THE GRAND
4104 E. Willow St.
Long Beach, CA 90815
7:00pm—8:30pm

February 4, 2008
Dr. James Waisman

MANHATTAN BEACH

MARRIOTT
1400 Parkview Ave.
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
7:00pm—8:30pm

February 19, 2008
Dr. Bichlien Nguyen

COSTA MESA

AYRES HOTEL
325 Bristol St.
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
7:00pm—8:30pm



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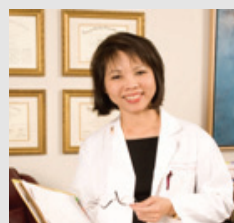


Facts About Women's Wellness

- Exercise helps to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- More exercise promotes psychological well-being and helps release stress.
- Take stairs instead of an elevator.
- Go for a walk during lunch or coffee break.
- Work-out with someone else, it makes exercise more fun.
- Eating a healthy diet along with exercise lowers your risk for cancer and heart disease.
- Know your limits on fats, salt and sugars.
- Focus on fruits, vary your veggies, get calcium-rich foods, make half of your grains whole and go lean with protein.

We want to hear from you! If you have a thought or an idea, please submit it to info@breastlink.com





Bichlien Nguyen, MD.

Barbara K. Robinson Research Program

By Bichlien Nguyen, MD

Breastlink Medical Group, Inc is dedicated to delivering optimal breast cancer care and in accordance with our mission, we offer our patients access to breast cancer clinical research.

We are fortunate to have the support of the Barbara K. Robinson Research Program, which enables us to develop and maintain an active research program. We have a dedicated and well-trained research staff under the leadership of Cheryl Jacobs, CCRP, Director of Clinical Research, and Dr. Bichlien Nguyen, a breast oncologist, Medical Director of Clinical Research.

Our research program includes cancer treatment protocols for early to advanced, metastatic and relapsed breast cancer. This program offers new chemotherapy agents and combinations, new targeted therapy, and innovative immunology therapy such as vaccines. We also offer opportunities for patients to enroll in research protocols involving diagnostic and preventive procedures.

For patients with early breast cancer that can be appropriately treated with systemic therapy before surgery (in the "neoadjuvant" setting), national research protocols are available. Neoadjuvant chemotherapy is used to shrink the tumor before surgery, thereby improving the chance of breast conservation, and a better cosmetic result.

Additionally, for those women whose tumors disappear completely in response to

neoadjuvant chemotherapy (termed complete pathologic response) there is an even greater survival benefit.

One such neoadjuvant protocol is NSABP B-40, which investigates the value of adding either chemotherapy agent capecitabine (xeloda) or gemcitabine (gemzar) to the standard chemotherapy drug docetaxel (taxotere) given before surgery to women with large operable breast cancer.

Half of the women will also be chosen randomly to receive a new agent called bevacizumab (Avastin). Bevacizumab is an antibody that neutralizes the growth factor (vascular endothelial growth factor-VEGF) that is responsible for growing new blood vessels. Without new blood vessel formation, a tumor starves and stops growing.

This new drug has been shown to double the time to disease progression when used with a chemotherapy drug called paclitaxel (taxol) in women with breast cancer that has spread to distant organs in the body. Therefore, it is being tested to see if it would add survival benefit to chemotherapy given to those women who do not have visible distant spread of cancer but who are at high risk for microscopic spread at the time of diagnosis.

This is only one of many protocols available at the Barbara K. Robinson Breast Cancer Research Program.

For more information please contact our research department at (562) 981-6101

Breastlink Medical Group, Inc.

2008 Events

Jan 10-11 Evidence-Based CAM for Cancer Advocates West Palm Beach, FL

Jan 15 San Antonio Update Long Beach, CA

Feb 4 San Antonio Update Manhattan Beach, CA

Feb 19 San Antonio Update Costa Mesa, CA

Feb 22-24 Conference for Young Women affected by Breast Cancer Jacksonville, FL

Feb 29 Triple Negative Think-Tank Newport Beach, CA

Clinical Trials Available for All Stages of Breast Cancer

The Barbara K. Robinson Breast Cancer Research Program is currently enrolling participants into 14 clinical research trials. A member of three cancer cooperative groups funded by NCI, the Barbara K. Robinson Program participates in their clinical trials as well as conducting pharmaceutical company and investigator-initiated trials. As a community based center, the Barbara K. Robinson Program has the opportunity to collaborate with other research institutions and is currently involved in trials with UCLA, UC Irvine and the University of Washington.

Three trials offering treatment before surgery (neoadjuvant) are available for women with newly diagnosed breast cancer. Four additional adjuvant trials are available for patients with newly diagnosed breast cancer who have already had surgery.

Seven studies are available for patients with metastatic breast cancer, including one for metastatic inflammatory breast cancer. These studies are testing the use of one or more novel agents either alone or in combination with standard chemotherapy agents. These novel agents include lapatinib, pazopanib, sunitinib malate, sorafenib, ONTAK, and an herbal agent BZL101.

For information about any of these clinical studies, please contact the Barbara K. Robinson Breast Cancer Research Group at (562) 981-6101.

By Cheryl Jacobs, CCRP

At Breastlink, breast cancer optimal care is the integration of medical oncology, surgery, pathology, radiation oncology, genetic risk...

Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund

By Michele Rakoff

One always reflects upon accomplishments and future directions as the year comes to an end. In 2007 Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund sent three advocates to the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium to learn about cutting-edge research and treatment. They returned filled with information in preparation to deliver an advocate perspective at community lectures that will be presented with physicians (scheduled events are listed in this newsletter). Their reports will be available soon at www.breastcancercare.org. BCCRF sponsored a vital community meeting, A Public Forum Around Cancer Care, Who is Paying the Price?, evoking thoughtful discussion. One of our top achievements was to create a Young Women's Advisory Council. This group of smart, energetic young breast cancer survivors gave noteworthy information on topics relating to relationships with spouses/partners/children, fertility issues and living beyond breast cancer.

To raise awareness BCCRF sponsored a successful benefit performance of Charlotte's Web at the Long Beach Playhouse. We also provided survivor and physician models, as well as educational materials for the Eileen Fisher Fashion Show in Newport Beach which featured Dr. John Link. BCCRF participated at the Governor and First Lady's Conference and was a sponsor of the 5th annual Spirit of Survivorship conference.

Following our mission to educate, we are designing a new website that is interactive. We will expand the advocate program by sending more survivors to the annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium and other national breast cancer meetings. BCCRF intends to carefully investigate funding research focusing on survivorship issues. And we will continue the Young Women's Advisory Council, leading to programs designed for young women facing breast cancer.

Please remember to send your submissions for *Memoir's from your Heart*. Send a poem, a short writing or a recipe to paul@bccrf.org. Make sure to include your photo and your address and email.

We wish you a joyous Holiday Season and health in the New Year.

Optimal Care Team Profile



Lori Rezabek-Kells, I am a nurse practitioner at Breastlink, working with the physicians to help manage the care of our patients. I grew up in Iowa during my so-called "Wonder bread" years in the 50's and moved to California in 1986. After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in nursing, I entered a Master Program and graduated in 1983 with a Master's Degree in Public Health. I have worked as an adult nurse practitioner since then...24 years! My first year out I worked at "The Institute for Low Back Care" until I found a job with a medical oncologist and was able to return to taking care of cancer patients, which I love to do.

I worked as an Oncology Nurse Practitioner for a Medical Oncologist for three years. I relocated to California and worked with a Gynecologic Oncologist at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles for several years. It was at Good Sam that I met my husband, Paul. He was a Vice President there in charge of Facilities.

Inspiration by April Kobayashi



April, during chemo

Becoming a parent changed my life; I never would have imagined it saving my life. Just weeks before my 34th birthday I was given the diagnosis of stage IIA-III B invasive ductal carcinoma breast cancer. I was a young, healthy woman, with a fairly clean family health history. My first and only child had just turned one year old. Some of my first thoughts when given my diagnosis were, is my daughter going to get cancer, what does this mean for my family, and am I going to die? I was challenged; I had been a person who rarely ever got a cold. I went from being healthy, to being admitted to the hospital for a unilateral mastectomy, received four months of chemotherapy and then seven weeks of daily radiation. Having my precious one-year-old daughter around was my absolute inspiration to keep my head up and get through my treatments. While at times taking care of a toddler was tough, even on the days when I felt the worst I would muster up a smile for my daughter and it would always make me feel better inside. It's true, a smile is contagious and it can make you feel good all over, especially when received from your beautiful, precious child. I made it through the rigors and am now a two-year survivor and parent with a child who is still pure inspiration!



April and Hannah

I especially want to thank my husband Charlie for stepping up and taking care of our family. He is my rock solid support. And I am fortunate to be part of the YWAC group and create a future of quality and useful resources for young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

We married in 1989 and had three beautiful children. I also was in a Doctorate Program at California Graduate Institute for Professional Psychology and graduated in 1993. Currently I am a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and see a few patients in private practice. After my stint with gynecologic oncology, I went to work for a Gastroenterology Oncologist at Century City Hospital. With the closing of the hospital, I found myself at Breastlink.

I have worked at Breastlink with this great group of people since 2003. The thing I like most about working here is that it feels like we are all one big happy family, and all of our patients become part of that family. We also treat every woman with respect and to the best of our ability, not allowing insurance to compromise our standards of care. We are on the leading edge of treatment for breast cancer, including having research drugs available and the breast cancer vaccine. I truly believe there isn't a better place to get treatment for breast cancer than here!

... assessment, imaging, integrated research, and the whole woman in partnership with each individual woman and her unique needs.